



International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health

P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
IJPESH 2015; 1(4): 25-28
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www.kheljournal.com
Received: 30-12-2014
Accepted: 11-01-2015

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The Commonwealth Games (Glasgow 2014) has the objectives been met?

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Abstract

Commonwealth Games a sporting competition bringing together members of the British Empire is a concept that had been talked about amongst commonwealth nations since the rebirth of the Olympics games. The historical antecedent of the commonwealth Games right from its inception in 1930 was first proposed by Reverend Astley Cooper in 1891. As the focus of the paper is to x-ray and discuss whether the objectives of the founding fathers of the games was met; the following objectives of the Games were emphasized. To serve as a linking force between developed and developing commonwealth countries; To help in bridging the gap between the developed and developing commonwealth countries in Sport Development; Exchange of sport research ideas, coaches, equipment and provision of facilities to member countries. Instances of politics within the commonwealth games association, uneven spread of sporting expertise (Hosting right to developing member countries) and racial inclinations has been the major problems affecting the games. The paper went further to recommend that for the commonwealth games objectives to be achieved, hosting the games should be shared amongst member countries and the games should be devoid from all kinds of political inclinations.

Keywords: Commonwealth, Games, objectives & met

1. Introduction

Commonwealth also called Commonwealth of Nations, formerly (1931- 46) and British Commonwealth of Nations (1946), a free association of sovereign states comprising Great Britain and a member of its former dependencies who have chosen to maintain ties of friendship and practical cooperation and who acknowledge the British monarch as symbolic head of their association. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1994).

British Commonwealth games, quadrennial sports competition embracing athletics (track and Held) gymnastics, bowls and swimming events are for both men and women, boxing, cycling, shooting, weight lifting and wrestling for men only. Rowing, shooting, badminton and fencing have also been included occasionally. Participants must be amateurs and must be qualified by birth or residence in some member country (or a dependency of a member country) to the commonwealth^[3].

The commonwealth, in recognizing the Value of sports in achieving a broad range of developmental objectives recognition that is now shared; the ties that bound the commonwealth were highly diverse, this are:

1. Sentiment was one, particularly in the old dominions
2. Trade investment and currency agreements
3. Population migrations
4. Common educational, professional and judicial heritage
5. Sports (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1994)

2. Historical Antecedents of the Commonwealth Games

The concept of the commonwealth games may be traced to the year 1891, when an Englishman, from Yorkshire, Mr. J. Astley Cooper, wrote an article published in the magazine greater Britain, followed by a letter in the times, (London) of 30th October, 1891. He suggested among other things "athletics" as a means of drawing together members of the "Empire". The games bring together representatives athletes from countries whose total population and area equal to one quarter of the world. It is second only to the Olympics games in extent,^[1].

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In 1911, the coronation of His Majesty, King George the fifth warranted a "festival of empire", which was celebrated at the crystal palace ground in London. Among the series of entertainment was an "inter-empire sports meeting" in which representatives teams from Australia and New Zealand, Canada and Britain in track and Held, boxing, swimming, team emerged the over-all winner.

In 1930, Mr. M. M. Robinson, a Canadian succeeded in

organizing what become truly the first British Empire games from August 16 - 23 in Hamilton, were eleven countries were represented in the competitions [2].

It was agreed that the games would be held in varying commonwealth cities at four (4) year intervals, preferably midway between the Olympic Games. The games have been held except in the years 1942 and 1946. Women events began to be included in 1934.

Hosting Countries and Years of Competition:

Country	Year
London (England)	1911
Hamilton (Ontario) Canada	1930
London (England)	1934
Sydney (Australia)	1938
	1942
	1946
	} The two world wars
Auckland (New Zealand)	1950
Vancouver (Canada)	1954
Cardiff (Wales)	1958
Perth (W. Australia)	1962
Kingston (Jamaica)	1966
Christchurch (New Zealand)	1974
Edmonton (Canada)	1978
Brisbane (Scotland)	1982
Edinburgh (Scotland)	1986
Auckland (New Zealand)	1990
Victoria Games	1994
Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)	1998
Manchester (London)	2002
Melbourne (Australia)	2006
Delhi (India)	2010
Glasgow (Scotland)	2014
Gold Coast (Australia)	2018

Source: Commonwealth Minister's Reference Book (2014)

3. Objectives of the Commonwealth Games

Commonwealth Games have the potential to promote peace and international cooperation; objectives of the Games as provided by the Commonwealth Games Federation (1954) include the following:

1. To serve as a linking force between developed and developing Commonwealth countries.
2. To help in bridging the gap between the developed and the developing Commonwealth countries in sport development.
3. Exchange of sport, research ideas, coaches, equipment's and facilities to member countries.

"Commonwealth Minister's Reference Book, (2014)"

4. Has the Stated Objectives Been Met?

1. To serve as a linking force between developed and developing Commonwealth countries.

Sport lies at the heart of the Commonwealth Association a vital and dynamic force linking developed and developing Commonwealth countries, Laughter and joy are not a privilege of wealth and ordinary (or not so ordinary) people mixing together from different regions can often give their governments a lesson in international cooperation, it is for such reasons as these that Commonwealth games seek to

accomplished.

It provided a high point of commonwealth following this quadrennial Games create a relations which supersedes any amount of visit of government officials, similarly, the spirit of good will that grew up between for example, the Welsh Ardwyn singers and the dance group from Fiji during their two weeks stay in the artists village was a golden example of how shared enthusiasms can strengthen the bond between peoples of developed and developing countries of the Commonwealth (Edmonton Games, 1978).

While the Games around the globe like the Olympics, African Games, Asian Games and Pan Am have been found on geographic and climatic factors, the Commonwealth Games has been found on history, a unique characteristic of the Commonwealth Games; is being the only Games which share a common language, all athletics and officials converse with each other in English creating an atmosphere that leads has led to the Commonwealth Games being long known as the "Friendly Games."

Yet this objective of the game has over the years been under political threat, for example, in the 13th games at Edinburgh 31 of the 45 Commonwealth Member which had agreed to take part boycotted the games in protest against the stand of the British Government against taking stronger economic

measures against South Africa's apartheid policies (Commonwealth current, 1982).

Nigeria despite having readiness a strong team of athletes, initiated a move, this gathered momentum among the boycotting countries, including Jamaica, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Uganda, India, Antigua, Barbuda, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei, Cyprus, Dominica, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Malaysia, Mauritius, PAPUA New Guinea, St - Kitts - Nevis, St - Lucia, St - Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Fourteen members' countries and six dependencies attended, folding a total of 26 teams.

In the end, the Games were the smallest since 1954. England won the largest number of medals, while the Scots and the games organizers' extended warm hospitality to the teams and visitors.

2. To help in bridging the gap between the developed and developing Commonwealth Countries in sports development.

Sport is an important means of developing and fostering understanding between people, and especially between the young people¹ of all countries, which in turn will make for a harmonious channel through which developed countries could help the developing countries in sports developments. For example, in 1989_p the Commonwealth has led the way in recognizing the value of sport in achieving a broad range of developmental objectives, recognition that is now shared by United Nations agencies, the World Bank and the World Health Organization, in view of the above the Commonwealth Head of Government which is the highest governing body of the Commonwealth Countries set up a committee known as Government Committee on cooperation through sport (GCCS) members of the Committee are appointed by the Commonwealth Secretary General on behalf of the (CHOGM) Commonwealth Head of Government meeting and comprising representatives of both developed and developing Countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations and special experts.

The GCCS aims to help bridge the gap between the developed and developing Commonwealth in sports development, particularly in opening up increased access to basic sporting opportunities for young people. Its work has moved sport into the mainstream of Commonwealth policy programme development, integrating sport into related sectors such as Youth, Gender, education and Health. It also serves as a catalyst and advisor in raising the awareness of the benefits of sport in CHOGM meetings and through existing regional sporting networks. In 1997, for example, the CCCS worked with Olympic and Commonwealth Games Associations, governments and aid agencies in Harare Forum on sport and development in Southern Africa. It was the first meeting of its kind to bring leaders in the sport sector together with experts in international aid to increase the effectiveness of aid programming and expand access to sport for the most disadvantaged and marginalized. It also encourages pilot projects and case studies examining the place of sports in development for example, through sporting recreational, cultural and other endeavours, both developed and developing countries young people are being motivated to become more active, through participating in health productive and falling activities e.g. Commonwealth Universities Games.

Organisation of competitions and tours between member countries such as the popular team sports of one-day cricket, field hockey, seven-a-side rugby, volley ball along with

women's hockey help address the gender imbalances of past Games.

3. Exchange of sports research ideas, coaches, equipment and provision of facilities to member countries.

In recognition of the growing importance of sport in Commonwealth relation that the developed Commonwealth Countries in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat created a sports development section in 1993, who works with the CHOGM Committee, the CGF and other sport - related organizational in conducting research, for example, the British Academy of Sport worked hand in hand with the sports development section of the Commonwealth games association and other Commonwealth Countries, exchanging research ideas, Coaches and provision of Equipment's and Facilities. It was through the assistance of the British Academy of Sports that Nigeria established the National Institute of Sports and till date there is bilateral pact signed in 1973 between Nigeria and Britain. To foster sporting and coaching expertise in less developed member countries, Australia, Britain and Canada are doing pioneering work in several regions of the developing Commonwealth, providing assistance in building sustainable sport systems and deriving fuller benefit from sport in individual, social and National development, particularly youth.

Because of the heightened recognition of sport, as an essential element in linking developed and the developing countries, the Commonwealth Games Federation and CCCS call for an increased exchange of ideas and investment in sport and has a positive response at the pan-Commonwealth policy and programme levels and among donor member governments. Through, such instruments as Aussie sport and Australian Pacific 2000 programme, the UK/South Africa Sport initiative and the Canadian Commonwealth Sport Development Programme.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations:

From the discussions and analysis made in this paper, it can be stated that for the 60 years of the Commonwealth existence, hosting, politics and Racial inclinations has been the major problems bedeviling the Commonwealth Game for instance. There is an uneven spread of sporting expertise only once in 1966 and 1998 at Kingston Jamaica, and Kuala Lumpur - Malaysia, had the Games been mounted outside the old Commonwealth Countries - Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. In 1988 when the decision had to be made on the venue of the 1994 Games, the choice lay between Cardiff, New Delhi and Victoria.

From the first host city of Hamilton in Canada, the Games have been held in many of the major Commonwealth Countries of Canada, Australia & England. Canada held the Games (4) times in Hamilton 1930, Vancouver 1954, Edmonton 1978 & Victoria 1994. Australia held the Games (4) times in Sydney 1938, Perth 1962, Brisbane 1982 & Melbourne 2006. For the first time the Games were held in an Asian country in 1998, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia hosted the Games and again in 2010 the Games were held in Delhi India. The next Games will be held in Glasgow, Scotland in 2014 followed by Gold Coast, Australia in 2018 (Venkatswarlu 2010).

The 2014 Games three Cities bided to host the competition; Abuja (Nigeria), Glasgow (Scotland) and Halifax, Nova Scotia (Canada), the bidding race was won by Glasgow even though Halifax withdrew from the bidding at the last minutes allowing Abuja and Glasgow to slug it out Margaret Alva, the Indian Minister of Sports pleaded.

"Are you permanently going to keep us in ASIA and AFRICA away from the pride and pleasure of hosting the Games? "Are we permanently going to be guests at the table of the affluent? Do we not have the right to participate as equal members of the Commonwealth Family? McIntyre (1999)

However the decision favored Victoria, this has contravened the spirit of the games as sports transcend class, racial, religious gender lines and affluence. Roy McMurty, the chief justice of Ontario, highlighted the unequal spread of sporting prowess and participation levels which permitted a situation in which 85 percent of the members sent only 24 percent of the competitors, while the four (4) old Commonwealth members sent 70 percent of the competitors who won 80 percent of the medals (Commonwealth Ministers Reference Book, 1999).

Politics: In the 1980's, as the Games come under threat and witnessed a massive withdrawal of (31) out of the 45 member countries due to racial discrimination policy of South Africa and New Zealand sports link with South Africa as a result of British Government stand against taking stronger economic measures on South Africa reducing the number of the participating nations to twenty seven Malaysia's membership of the Commonwealth had come into question. Dr. Mahathir, the prime Minister, in a famous quote once said that: "There is nothing common about the wealth of the commonwealth".

He set his advisers the task of considering whether Malaysia should quit the association. From the spectrum of options they produced, ranging from, at one extreme, withdrawal, to at the other taking a lead, Mahathir chose the latter. Malaysia hosted the 1998.

To come nearer home, Nigeria during the time of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha were suspended from the commonwealth and later expelled, because of its military way of governance, Nigeria then contemplated withdrawal of its membership. Also Nigeria boycotted the 1978 Games because of New Zealand's sporting contacts with the South Africa. Boycott threats have also hung over the Games in 1974, 1982 and 1990 because of South Africa. In 1998 at the Kuala Lumpur Games the team from Singapore was booed as it entered the stadium during the opening ceremony, reflecting the cold relations between Singapore and the host nation.

This is a clear case of mingling politics with sports.

There are 71 member countries in the commonwealth Games Federation, only six nations of these have attended every Commonwealth Games; Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

Although there are many official Commonwealth Games sports, the actual sports at each edition of the games has differed as the program is determined by the host nation and the rules for the inclusion of certain sports has changed over the years resulting in a unique program for each year that the Games have held. Currently programs must be limited to a maximum of 17 sports. The host city can choose another 7 sports from the list of 17 optional sports plus aquatics; this gives the hosting city an edge over other participating nations.

For successful sustenance of the games, the following recommendations were made.

1. Hosting the games need to be shared amongst or around the regions. Mead of government should support the Commonwealth Games Federation and promote the Games as a corner stone of the Commonwealth.
2. The old members should aim to help bridge the gap, between the developed and the developing Commonwealth member countries in sport development, particularly in opening up increased access to basic

sporting opportunities for young people research and coaching programmes,

3. Selection of sports and Games to feature in the competition should be such that cut across member countries popular sports and not sports and Games that only favor developed countries, for example, at the Brisbane Games, England and Canada dominated the Games, who between them look nearly 300 medals. England finished with the biggest haul of medals 108, which was short of the record 109 won by Canada in Edmonton in 1978. Australia with a total of 107 medals headed the table as they won 39 gold, Canada could only manage third place this time with 82 medals, including 26 gold.
4. Most of the government and aid agencies focus their attention in assisting South Africa for example British government and New Zealand have a very strong ties assisting them, to the astonishment of other member countries, this should be hence forth stop. All member countries should be seen as equal preferential assistance and cooperation should be extended to all as sports transcend class, racial, religious and gender lines. Sports should be seen playing a role in developing cohesion and cooperation in the commonwealth.

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